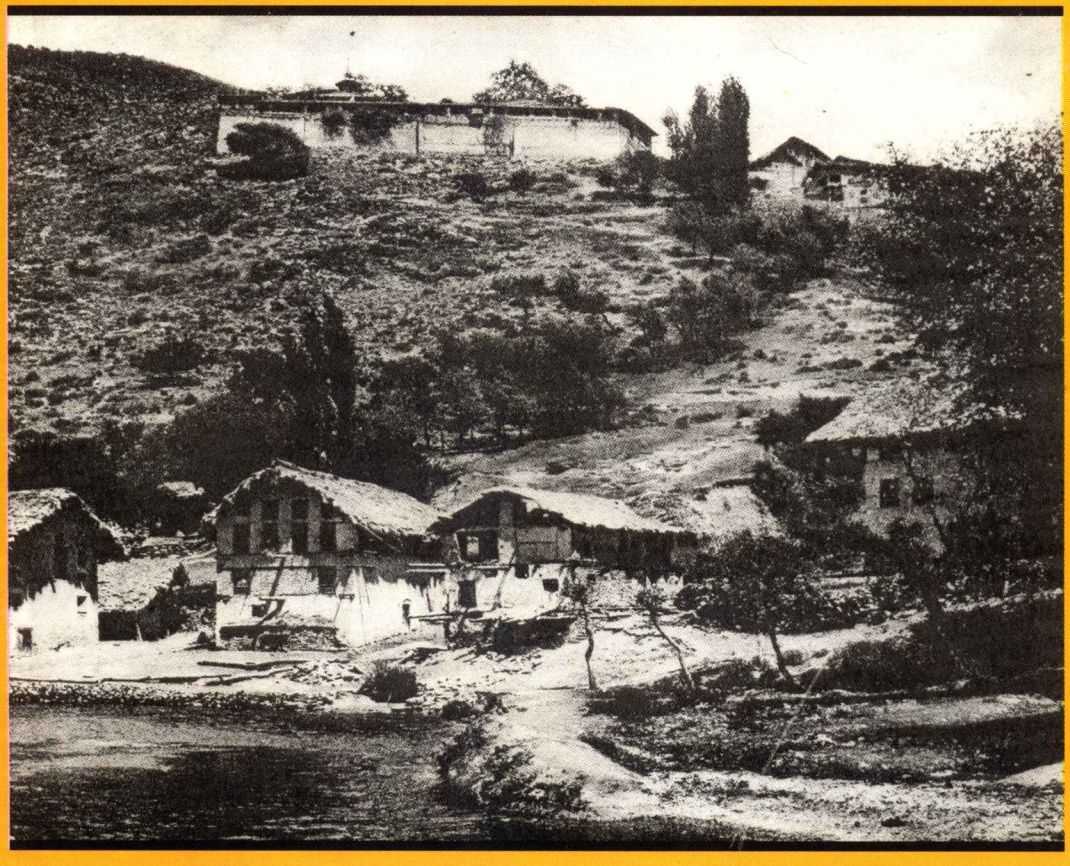
R.N.I. Regd. No. DelEng/2002/8792

Neelamatam

Vol 1 Issue No. 1 **April 2010**

नमस्ते शारदा देवी कशमीर पुरवासिनी

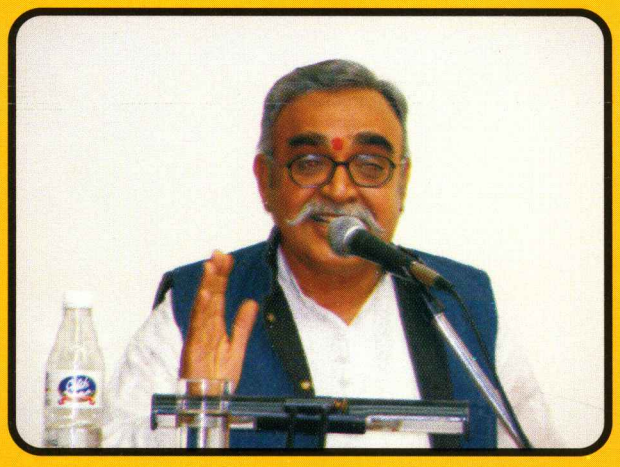
ज्ञानं अन्नं



In the Liddar Valley, Kashmir, Village with monastery on the heights.
Photograph by : Martin Hurlimann, Germany, 1928

नीलमतम्

Research Journal of Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute



Inauguration of Exhibition by Mr. P.N. Kachru

From the Editor

This is a special occasion to welcome my young and erudite scholar friend Prof. M. L. Kaul whom I have been cherishingly expecting to fill the pages of *Neelamatam* with his penetrating intellectual scholarship. It is with a protracted goading that my efforts have borne the fruit to receive Prof. Kaul's well-constructed research paper on 'the concept of Sunya from Bhuddhism to Kashmir Shaivism to Lalla Ded.'.

Shunyata, the void- ness, being the intrinsic nature of existence even in its relational situation, was propounded by the mystic philosopher Nagarjuna. The philosophy of Nagarjuna, the renowned Buddhist dialectician has laid a profound influence on the universal Buddhist thought currents but in particular has augmented considerably the Kashmir Shaivic thought in its philosophical evolution. Nagarjuna's presence in Kashmir is elusive, indefinite and bearing no historic clues excepting a lonely and a casual mention by Kalhana that Nagarjuna stayed at the monastery of Sharadavana (Harvan). However, his times are corraborated with the rule of Kanishka (120A.D.) who annexed Kashmir to his kingdom and naturally must have facilitated the influence of Nagarjuna's philosophy over the Mahayanist Kashmir. Nagarjuna's contemporaneity with Kanishka has , however, been confirmed by Kalhana in the Rajatarangini. Morever, the spread of Madhyamika Buddhist trend into Tibet and China has been due to the Buddhist monk Kumarajiva, who spent most of his lifetime in Kashmir to study the philosophy under the discipleship of Bandhudatta (400A.D.) the renowned Kashmiri Madhyamika philosopher.

Buddha's solution of life as being *Nirvana* had left it undefined, unresolved and unexplained, leaving an ample scope for its expression through the inclusion of prevalent ritualistic practices from *Aagamas* and *Tantras*, thus terming it Mahayana and dividing into two schools of thought. Nagarjuna's effort for unification by taking the concept of Nirvana to its philosophic conclusion through his dialectical argumentations resulted in his works titled *Madhyamika Karika.*

He preached non-exclusive understanding as the way to the skillfulness of non-clinging. His emphasis of non- contentiousness (*unupalambha*) which he regarded as the very heart of the teachings of Buddha. Nagarjuna pleads that the thirst for *real* in man is misplaced by his tendency to seize and cling, both to relative as absolute which leads to suffering and to dead ends(*anata*). By right understanding (*dharmaanaam bhutapratyaveksha*) one understands the determinate and indeterminate, not as separate entities but existent by virtue of each other. Hence, to understand them as separate entities or interdependent, both concepts lead to misconceptions. It is the basic conception in the philosophy of Nagarjuna that while the intermediate reality is the basis and the reason of the determinate reality; therefore it is the very nature of them, and thus can not form another entity apart from them. Likewise, the man is not apart from indeterminate reality and is the ultimate ground of his very being. So the ultimate sense of void-ness (*shunyata*) which is the thirst for the real; and lies in the realization of this real nature of oneself.

Prudence (prajnya) as the principle of compassion is the Middle Way (*madhyamika*) the way that rises above exclusiveness; but at the same time there is no rejection of anything except the imagination of absoluteness in regard to what is relative. The nature of *prajnya* therefore, is not exclusiveness. Says Nagarjuna: " Everything holds good in the case of one who is in agreement with *Shunyata*."

The Middle Way, therefore ,preaches the rejection of views; which means that no view being a view is ultimate. The ultimate truth, is not any view. The different forms of exclusive views, whether in terms of absolute identity or absolute difference, are simply reducible to the forms of externalism and negativism. To abandon these views is to give up the claim of relative completeness; and thus what remains is *Shunyata* (void)

Nagarjuna does not negate anything, for there is nothing to be negated. All things being void, there is neither a thing to be negated nor a negation. So by making known the void-ness of all things, it only expresses, though indirectly the *Absolute* which is perfectly isolated from all its appearances.

Kashmir Shaivist thought traces back its roots to the hoary sectarian *Shaivagamas*, later recorded in *Tantras* (not *Vaishnava Tantras*) of the western school (the *Pashchimanaya*). Later on the thought had spread its tentacles as far as to Greek, Shaka and the Parthian regions due to their control over Northern India between the second century B. C. to first century A. D. These *Aagam* practices, though bereft of theology and theorems were of symbolist, ritualistic and practical nature. Such meditative practices climaxed into the *yoga* of arousing and rising of the *Kundalini* that lent the practitioner the Super Cosmic experience. It was this experience and the system that through history became a predominant factor with various ontological trends and hagiographical treatises.

Kashmir Shaivist practitioners and thinkers, while accepting the *Void* as *Absolute* argued that even the *Absolute* (void) being an experience of a Condition or Non-Condition, presupposes the *Experient* and the *Experienced.* The experience of void does not prove that there is no Experient; for without the Experient, even the experience of void would not be possible. It is this experience of the *Absolute* that further transforms its nature by awakening of *Sahasraara,*where it presents itself as Supreme Omniscience. It is this ascending and descending order of *Kundalini* that reveals the happenings of withdrawal (into ultimate, *Cit* or *Parasamvit*- the non-relational conscientiousness) and appearances of the changeless principle of all changes down to multiplicity.

As referred by Prof. M. L. Kaul in his article to the overtones of Vaishnavite and Vedanta tendencies, these seem to be of remote possibility as the Vaishnavite influence was completely unknown till the advent of the cruel Hindu fanatic Mihirakula. Thereafter we can feel the traces of Vaishnavite influence in the eight century rule of Lalitaditya, who installed the massive sculpture of the Brahata Buddha side by side to the image of Parihasa Keshav. Thereafter even up to the middle of the tenth century A.D. the Vaishnavite influence did not seem acceptable for which the contemporary Kingt Yasakara of Kashmir enforced the rules regulating the caste conditions of life (*Varnaasramadharma*) amongst his subjects in order to wean away his subjects from *Tantric* practices of *Shaivagamas* .

P. N. Kachru

About the cover page: The last vestiges of Buddhist faith in Kashmir lingered on till 1928 when the monastery up in the Liddar valley was photographed by a German traveler. The village is known as Botakoot, as the Ladakhi Buddhists would pay a yearly visit to the monastery. In Kashmiri the Ladakhi is called Bota, and the region of Ladakh is known as Botun.

The Concept of Sunya from Buddhism to Kashmir Shaivism to Lalla Ded

Prof. M.L. Koul

All * credible evidences from the annals of Kashmir history establish that Kashmir was a pivotal centre of Buddhist thought and learning. To counter the narrow philosophical positions of *Hinyana Buddhism* it was in Kashmir that the doctrinal positions and theoretical mould of the *Mahayana Buddhism* were formulated and shaped out. A galaxy of Buddhist scholars of great eminence who were Kashmiri in their origins or had settled in Kashmir from other parts of India contributed their speculative faculties to the enunciation of the contours of *Mahayana Buddhism* and enriched its thought-content by shaping out its structures. All concerted efforts were made to disseminate the thought to a number of countries beyond the margins of the native country. *The Mahayana* thought in its debate of Reality, Soul and Human destiny had marked features of concordance with the mainstream thought of India.

Mahayana thought over a period of time branched off into two thought divisions of *Madhyamik* and *Vijnanvad.* In the pages of Buddhist thought *Madhyamik* is also designated as *Sunyvad* because of its core philosophy about *sunya*. Nagarjun, a great celebrity in the realms of Buddhist thought founded *Madhyamik* school through his work named *Madhyamik Karika*. In his seminal work, Nagarjun rejects the idea of an object existing or non-existing permanently or temporarily. He as a way out sought for a mean or middle-path. Being an expert dialectician he searched for causes for things that existed. His postulations were startling as the world for him did not exist and was nothing but void and emptiness. Things that exist are inherently lacking in substance. Anything that depends on a cause to exist has no existence, just as borrowed money is no real wealth.

The mainstream India philosophical thought was wary to accept the stipulations of Nagarjun and characterized it as philosophy of voidism or nihilism. All affirmative schools of thought put the thesis of Nagarjun to scathing criticism and dismissed it as destructive. It was Dr. T.R. V. Murti who in his highly acclaimed work, Buddhism, gave new orientation to the very concept of *Sunya* as propounded by Nagarjun. He forcefully argued against those scholars who had interpreted *sunya* as voidism, emptiness or sheer nihilism. As per Dr. Murti, Nagarjun never thought of sunya as voidism, emptiness or nihilism. He places Nagarjun's *sunya* at par with *Brahman* in *Vedanta* or *Vijnan* in *Vijnavad*. *Sunya* ,to him, is a metaphysical reality or a metaphysical concept. As *Madhyamik* is absolutism, Dr. Murti calls *sunya* its metaphysical reality.

Dr. Murti maintains that *sunya* is a being that lies behind the world of relativity and conditioned existence. As a metaphysical being it is neither relative nor conditioned. He further states that world is *sunya* because it is relative and has no independent existence of its own. *Sunyata* is another concept that is popular with the voidists. The critics of voidism understand it in the sense of negation. But, it in fact, means negation of all views including its own view.

Despite the wide-spread range of

Buddhism in Kashmir, the popularity of Shiva's worship and many broad conceptualizations about popular religion never ceased to be. Being the most tolerant religion of the world religions, Buddhism was never in conflict with other forms of religions and their variegated methodologies of worship. Though a popular creed in Kashmir, Buddhism with its non-soul doctrine and *sunya-like* nihilistic conceptions failed to appeal to the spiritual impulse of Kashmir. The result was the churning of an affirmative strand of thought that evolved as a reaction to the formulations of the Buddhist thinkers.. With Shiva as its core concept the new thought drew upon philosophies of Sankya, Vaishnavism and Buddhism to weave its own harmonized pattern planked on non-dual structures. As a monistic absolutism it re-cycled old metaphysical and epistemological issues and evolved new approach and premise to yarn its world-view logically and coherently. *Sunya* as a vital Buddhist concept was appropriated, and was oriented in a manner that appeared absolutely at variance with its original Buddhist trappings and semantics.

The non-dual thinkers wedded to Shaivism put the Buddhist thesis of *sunya* to a thorough and incisive debate in all its ramifications. What emerges from the contours of their debate is that *sunya* as a metaphysical concept can be acceptable and accorded the same position that *Brahman* in *Vedanta* has. They appear to have no serious objections to place *sunya* even at par with *Vijnan* in *Vijnanvad.* But they have far-reaching reservations to treat *sunya* at par with the Metaphysical Reality of Shiva who has the pre-eminent attribute of *'Swatantrya'*, which is perfect freedom to act and know. Because of the attribute of '*Swatantrya*', Shiva is ' *Chaitanya*' and *sunya* is lacking in this essential attribute. So, they evaluate *sunya* as a lower level of reality which they are unable to accept as the absolute Reality that Shiva encompasses.

The Shiva thinkers seriously object to the voidist position of rejecting the world as emptiness or void. The world to them, is neither insubstantial nor momentary. In their thought-model Shiva pre-exists as a being and Shakti is His becoming and their unity is the absolute reality. If Shiva is real, so is His Shakti. As per logic, that what is real will generate or emanate real. Real generating or emanating unreal is logically preposterous. The Shaiva thinkers are loud in their assertion that world and objects in the world are real as they are one with the light of consciousness. If they were not to appear or illumine in the light of consciousness, they would not exist at all.

The non-dual Shaivites are unanimous in rejecting the Buddhist thesis of momentariness as it reduces all manner of experiences, fleeting and abiding to mere nothingness. As emphasized by them, the concept of momentariness dismisses all possibilities of making judgments and establishing contact through expression and communication.

In the annals of philosophy it is well known that no new thought is totally new. What appears as new has ideas, concepts and stipulations from that what is dismissed as old and jaded. The non-dual thesis of Kashmir Shaivism as already mentioned has strands from *Shaiva Siddhant* of South India, *Sahajyani*, Buddhism, *Sankhya* and varied philosophies of Vaishnavism. *Sunya* as a concept has been incorporated from Buddhism especially its variant called *Madhyamik*. The Shaivite thinkers have modified *sunya* to

reinforce and strengthen their own philosophical positions and fundamental thesis of monism. The Buddhist meanings and trappings of *sunya* have been totally discarded and given a new orientation in sync with core philosophy of non-dual Shaivism. The very definition of *sunya* has been altered as '*shunyam ashunyam iti ukhtam'* which in translation means '*shunya*' is said to be '*ashunya*'. It is not an inexplicable riddle. The definition makes it clear that *sunya* is not void or emptiness. What we call *sunya* does not contain something lying in a state of total mergence.

The Shaivites translate *sunya* as '*abhava*' which when broken becomes 'a+ bhava' meaning Shiva and world or objects lying in his consciousness. *Sunya*, to them is in no case a condition as what Buddhist call void or emptiness. *Sunya* is what Shaivites call '*sad-bhava*' which marks the presence of world or objects, but in a state of total mergence.

The following verse explains the Shaivite position on *sunya* :

"ashunyam shunyam iti ukhtam, shunyat abhava uchyate
abhava satu vigyeyo yatra bhava layam gata"

It conveys that *sunya* is *asunya*, not the condition of *sunya*, void or emptiness. *Sunya* means *abhava*, which in translation again means a state in which objects (*bhavas*) lie in a condition of absolute mergence in Shiva's consciousness supreme, the objects are there, but not in their name or form, but in a state of absolute dilution indistinguishable from Shiva's consciousness supreme also called '*maha-vyom*'.

Sunya in the Vakhs of Lalla Ded

Lalla Ded has a strong theoretical knowledge of the tenets of non-dual Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. She was fortunate enough to have a preceptor *(guru)* like Sidda Srikanth, popularly known as Syada Mol who happened to be in the line of the tradition of Shaiva Acharyas. Besides theoretical studies Lalla Ded as demanded by the thought itself was initiated in the Shaiva praxis by the same preceptor. As her mystical experiences reveal that she was put on the path of higher ascension to achieve Shivahood through the *Shaiva-yoga* which her venerated preceptor had introduced to her, dose by dose, step by step.

As Lalla Ded was a Shaiva practitioner, she happened to experience some such states where she felt that she neither belonged to the world of objects nor had the spiritual flashes that would have satiated her yearnings of attaining identity with Shiva. Such of her conditions are termed as *sunya* which very initiate has to experience while working out Shaiva praxis under the guidance of a *Shaiva-guru,* a released soul.

After rummaging all available versions of Lalla Ded's *vaakhs*, I was able to find out seven *vaakhs* in which Lalla Ded has made an explicit mention of *sunya* a state she had to experience before achieving the state of self-recognition. She was an ardent follower of the Shaiva precept of '*Shivo Bhutwa Shivam Yajet*' . Lalla Ded ardently worked out the *Shaiva Yoga*, the practices prescribed in it. A situation emerged when the external world appeared to get absorbed in her own self and the imbalance between subject and object appeared to disappear and all got merged into *sunya* (void). It is a stage in her spiritual evolution and not the

situation in which she finally attained Shivahood. She even ascended the state of *sunya* when she had felt that the world of name and form had risen to absorption. What was left was the state of *anamaya* which in Shaiva parlance means the condition of supremacy of the luminosity of consciousness supreme carrying the stir (*spand)* to create and absorb. The experience intensely felt by Lalla Ded has been grippingly conveyed in the *vaakh:*

'abhyas savikas layi wothu
gaganas saghun myul samistrat!

Sunya gol ta anamaya motu
Yuhuy wopdesh chuy bata'

Being aware of the entire Upanishadic oeuvre of literature, Lalla Ded has woven a superb allegory to explain the three functions of Param Shiva who creates, maintains and assimilates the universe. For the pupose she mentions Shiva who is the horse, Keshav who is the saddle and Brahma who is the stirrups. The horse in the allegory is the *'trigunatmac horse'* and Param Shiva alone having attributes of *'anahat, kha swaroop, shunyalai'* is capable of riding it.

Anahat, Kha-swaroop, Shunyalai, Aham-vimarsa and *Nada-binda* have philosophical meanings and need to be studied in the light of the thought Lalla Ded was thoroughly cultivated by her preceptor.

As per the Shaiva texts *Bindu* is the undifferentiated luminous and eternal consciousness supreme. Nada is the Shakti, the potency to manifest what lies in the *Bindu*. *Bindu* expands from *Chitta-Kala* to *Anand Shakti, Iccha Shakti, Jnan Shakti* and *Kriya Shakti.* Many unrelated meanings have been attributed to *anahat.* What Lalla Ded means by *anahat* is related to *Bindu* and *Nada. Anahat* is 'pranav', *Om* an unhindered and eternal sound which is *Bindu* when in state of unity with Param Shiva and *Nada* when in outward expansion.

Kha-swaroop and *Shunyalai* are the attributes of Param Shiva who is beyond time and space and is the abode of sunya which means that in the consciousness of Shiva the world of objects lies in a state of total mergence.

Lalla Ded conveys:

'anahat kha swaroop, shunyalai,
aham-vimarsa nada byand yas von'

As a Shaiva practitioner Lalla Ded merged her two breaths, *pran* and *apan* into *sushmana –nadi* also known as *madhya-nadi* which is considered as having a *sunya-like* condition. She realized that the outward world had ceased to be for her and the state of duality was not a reality. In this psychic condition of having broken with the outward world she experienced a new state of having lost her not-self, which till then was under the delusion of taking it as her real self. With this experience as her sheet-anchor she felt that the lotus of self-luminosity was about to blossom out.

The following *vaakh* conveys the same felt experience:

'sunyuk madan kodum panas
mea Lalli roozam na bodh na hosh;
vazay sapnis panai panas
ada kami hili phol Lalli pamposh'

Kashmir thought of Shiva non-dual is a philosophy of positive affirmation and has in no uncertain terms rejected all forms of asceticism . Lalla as evidenced by her *vaakhs* has lived a life of high moral values in which avarice, lust and

insatiable eating have no place. Greed, lust and indiscriminate indulgence in pleasures of eating signify attachment of an individual to the things that he takes for his real self. That is why Lalla says that vain imaginings are to be abandoned and petty desires are to be slain. It never means that she is preaching for any form of asceticism. Her emphasis is to abandon any form of attachment that encases the real self of an aspirant. Lalla exhorts to concentrate on Shiva, which will pave one's way to the attainment of a state where one will get merged in *Sunya* ,a name for transcendental Shiva in which world and its objects lie in a condition of absolute dilution.

The following *vaakh* is meaningful in this context:

'loob marun sahaz vetsarun
drogu zanun kalpan trav;
nishe chuy ta duru mo garun
sunes sunyah milith gav'

Before Lalla Ded achieved her spiritual state of self-recognition she had followed many courses to act out their efficacy and usefulness in achieving her destination. She had studied precious texts of *Tantras* especially *Bhairav Tantras* and then practiced upon the practices prescribed in them. She utilized all her learning from them and took to *mantras,* worked them out and marched ahead. She felt that what she had achieved through *Tantras* and *Mantras* was that she had purified her *chitta*, limited form of *chitti*, consciousness supreme. After purification of her *chitta,* which was there but was free from the disturbance brought about by subject-object relationship, Lalla Ded attained the state of an aspirant, who had attained a loftiness of spiritual hue and was in ecstasy where nothing remains, but her own self, stripped of all *malas* of attachment and duality. She in this lofty state merged into *sunya*, transcendental Shiva in whom the world of objects remains in an undifferentiated form. Lalla Ded sings:

'tanthar gali tai manthar motse
manthar gol tai motseyi chyath;
tseth gol tai kehn tin a kune
sunes sunyah milith gav'

Sunya, to Lalla Ded, has come from non-dual thought of Kashmir Shaivism which in turn had appropriated it from Buddhist thought. As a superb poet she sang it in *vaakhs* couching her intensely felt experiences. Being a philosophical concept, Lalla Ded communicates the states of *sunya* that she had experienced during the course of her spiritual evolution. She is a great poet because she makes her felt experiences the stuff of her verse-sayings. Her poetry is great because she is philosophical in what she conveys and pours out.

Mythical Spirits in Indian Literature and Their Extant Lore in Kashmir

S. N. Pandita

The belief in lycanthropic beings is age-old in India. In various passages of the *Rig- Veda* they are referred to as *Yatudhana* and are often linked to *Rakhsasa*. An interesting hymn in the *Rig-Veda* informs us that *Yatudhanas* are sorcerers and witches who during the night assume the forms of various animals like dogs, owls, vultures etc. They possess uncanny powers and lead their existence in the society of men. They are ,however, certainly un-human and therefore called *a-manusha*. In the legends they are known to exhibit bewildering blending of characteristics between men and animals. Though in general they are invariably dangerous and malignant yet at times the spirit of these beings is worthy to be propitiated as their action brings welfare of man.

According to the distinguished scholar Hendrik Kern, " they are to be regarded as personified forces of nature." Hermann Oldenberg considers them "as demoniacal beings who appear in human shape and their mythical account has to be viewed by considering the relations which are believed to exist between animal and human existence".

In ancient India, deceased kings were sometimes worshipped in the form of snakes. There are many legends about kings, who in fact were changed into snakes in consequence of a curse as a punishment to their evil deeds. The well known example is the story dealt with in the *Mahabharata (Udyog Parvan)* . It relates an account of a king named Nahusha "who after having been elevated to the throne of Indra in his presumption insulted seven sages and being cursed by Agastya was doomed to live as a snake for ten thousand years."

Similarly we come across occasional worship in the *Yajur-Veda* and more specifically in the *Atharva- Veda*. A verse in the *Yajur- Veda* informs us " Homage be to the snakes which so ever move along the earth; which are in the sky and in heaven, homage be to those snakes; which are the arrows of sorcerers and of tree spirits and which lie in holes; homage be to those snakes which are in the brightness of heaven; which are in the rays of sun which have made their abodes in the waters; homage be to those snakes."

In the Atharva- Veda we learn about many snake spirits called *Tiraschiraji, Pridaku, Kankparvan, Asita, Prishna, Upatrinya, Babhru, Taimata*, and *Apodaka* who are connected to the gods that protect the four quarters of the universe. As spirits they are identified as missiles (*heti*), eager ones (*avisyu*), radiant ones (*vairaja*), piercers (*pravidhyant*), helpers(*avasvant*), and smearers(*nilimpa*). According to Ralph Griffith the hymn attributed to these spirits" is a charm to win the favour of the serpents of all the regions under heaven."

In the Buddhist literature of an early date we come across the snake charm called *Paritta*. Similar references are encountered in two later texts namely the *Lalitavistra* and *Mahavastu* written in Sanskrit. Here the spirits are represented by a group of *Nakshatras*. Here the Brahmanical *Lokapalas* named *Surya, Yama, Varuna* and *Manibhadra* reside

side by side with the well known Buddhist *Lokapalas* called *Dhritrashtra, Virudhaka, Virupaksha* and *Kuvera*.

In the charm from the Atharva- Veda serpents are invoked under the name of *Devajana*, literally meaning "God's people" and bear a status equivalent to that of the *Gandharvas, Apsaras, Devas, Yakshas* or gnomes (*Punyajana*) and Manes (*Pitras*). Similar enumeration of supernatural beings comprising tree spirits referred to as *Vanaspati* or *Vanaspataya* and herbs named as *Oshadi* and *Virudh* are encountered in some other verses.

The Grihyasutras contain an account of "Sarpabali" (a snake sacrifice) "the annual rite of which has the two fold purpose of honouring and warding off the snakes." Similarly magical poems are ascribed to the sloughs and in particular snake's skin is believed to procure invisibility. According to Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, "the skin of a snake filled with ashes of a man bitten by a snake will cause beasts to be invisible." The attributes to the casting of snake's skin is a popular theme in many places in epic literature. The *Tandya- mahabrahmana* refers to snake sacrifice where casting off the skin by a serpent has been linked to longevity and immortality of the snake itself. The skin of a black snake is believed to possess medicinal properties.

Eating of snake's flesh or anointing with its fat the wound caused by a snake bite has been treated as a remedy against serpent poison among the Arabs, Greeks, Romans and Jews of earlier times. There are references in the ancient Indian literature where mere exhalation of poisonous snakes is supposed to afflict one with blindness. However, there are contrary fables like one in the *Panchatantra* which exemplify that one can recover from blindness by the smoke issuing from a venomous snake cooked in milk.

The most mysterious and magical property possessed by certain snakes mentioned in ancient Indian literature refers to the magical energy termed as *Tejas* in Sanskrit. From these accounts we learn about the *Naga Takshaka's* fiery bite that brings King Parikshit's palace to ashes or the combat of Lord Buddha with the *Naga* of *Uruvilva* in which the *Tejas* of the latter is vanquished. Similarly tales in the Buddhist Jatakas acquaint us with the fierce blast of some *Nagas* referred to as *Nasavata* or *Nasikavata.*

In the *Kharaputta Jataka* a fable is preserved which relates that an "angry Naga king sends four *Naga* youths and orders them to enter King Senaka's bedroom and destroy him like a chaff by the breath of their nostrils." Likewise, a whole city is reported to have turned into ashes by the force of a *Naga* spirit as is mentioned in the *Champeyya Jataka*. We similarly come across the wrath of the Naga who destroys a prosperous country by its bite that causes fire. The term *Ahivatakaroga* meaning the 'snake wind disease' is mentioned in the Buddhist literature to designate some disease probably the malarial fever. Even its belief that malaria is caused by snake's breath survives in the local tradition of the people of Terai in Himachal and Uttar Pradesh.

In the medieval ages a similar belief was connected with basilisks who by their breath polluted the air as a result of which no animal or plant could live. The basilisk, also called cockatrice is believed to be a hybrid of a snake and a cock and is credited to possess lethal power in its mere look. According to Topsell, " Among

all living creatures there is none that perishes sooner than does a man by the poison of a cockatrice; for with his sight he kills him, because the beams of cockatrice's eyes do corrupt the visible spirit of a man, which visible spirit corrupted, all the other spirits coming from brain and life of the heart are thereby corrupted and so the man dies." The belief that "poison eyed" snake can kill by means of its sight is well anchored in the Indian epics. The poet Bhartrihari in one of his aphorisms refers to the fact "that it is less dangerous to be struck by the eye of a serpent than by that of a woman." In the former case physicians and herbs are available but in the latter, none.

The knowledge of poisons and antidotes i.e. *Kalpa* or *Kalpasthana* is one of the eight chief subjects that have been dealt with by the famous Indian physician Susrata . While elaborating on ancient Indian medical science, says Susrata in his treatise, " Innumerable are the famous Lords of *Nagas* headed by Vasuki and beginning from Takshaka earth bearers, resembling the sacrificial fire in their splendour (*Tejas*) who incessantly cause thunder, rain and heat and by whom this earth with its oceans, mountains and continents is supported and who in their wrath might smite the whole world by their breath and sight. Homage be to them."

Snake poison is also known to have healing power particularly in counteracting the effect of poison. A verse in the *Atharva –Veda* states, "With poison I smite thy poison." And in the famous story of King *Nala* we actually come across to its verification where we find that the hero of the tale possessed of the evil spirit of Kali is relieved of its grip by the bite of the *Naga Karkota*. It is ,however, believed that serpents lose their poison at the mere sight of *Garuda*, after whom a precious stone, an emerald ,is named so. In the *Rajatarangini* it is written, "The danger of lightning is averted by the diamond; the ruby produces prosperity; the effect of many kinds of poisons is countered with emerald." In fact, says the *Rajatarangini* that "one of the early rulers of Kashmir had his arm adorned with precious stones sacred to *Garuda;*" possibly as an antidote to snake bite.

A practice still in vogue in India relates to the wearing of snake stone to counteract snake bite. This stone which is considered to have absorbent properties to draw the poison out from the wound caused by snake bite is usually a piece of bone soaked in blood that is repeatedly baked.

A pretty legend preserved in Harsacarita relates to a story regarding a pearl necklace that came into the king's hand from a holy man. The story reveals that the pearls of this necklace were born from the tears of the Moon-god that had fallen into a pearl oyster and thus became antidote to all poisons. The legend further states that the precious necklace was first a possession of Vasuki the king of serpents who subsequently presented it to Nagarjuna during his stay in the Nether world referred to as *Patala* in Sanskrit. Later Nagarjuna gave it to Satavahana who in due course gave it to a holy saint from whom King Harsha received it.

Similarly in Bana's famous Sanskrit work *Kadambari,* we learn of various auspicious rites performed by Vilasavati, the queen of Tarapida, the king of Ujjayni, in her anxiety to beget children. Here the legend relates to the spirits invoked by her by taking dips in pools inhabited by *Naga* tribes and worship of a *Peepal* tree by circumambulating it in sun-wise turns.

It is no matter of surprise that snakes are also regarded as tutelary deities. According to a Bengali tradition each domicile of a house has a representative serpent called *Vastu-sarpa* . It is believed that if a *Vastu-sarpa* abandons the house of the dweller it is a sign of ill omen and perpetuity of the family and safety of the house are seen as endangered. There is a tradition in South India that if a snake enters a house it is never forced out, rather, the inconvenient guest is fed plentifully and offered sacrifices. Orthodox and devout Hindus in general are known to keep deadly snakes in their houses for years and even at the peril of losing their life they may hardly ever be bold enough to evict the honoured guest.

According to William Crooke, "The benevolent house-hold snakes represent the soul of some deceased ancestor which has taken up its residence there." The concept of snake as the 'son of earth' regards serpents as guardians of buried treasure. In a story in '*Panchatantra*', we have a fable where a snake grants gold pieces to a poor Brahman.

Crooke further informs us," It is a common Indian belief that when a very rich man dies without an heir he cannot take away his thoughts from his treasure, and returns to guard it in the form of a monstrous serpent. But after a time he becomes tired of his serpent life and either in a dream or assuming human voice he asks the person living near the treasure to take it and offer him one of their dearest relatives in return. When some avaricious person complies with the serpent's wish he gets possession of the wealth and the serpent then enters into some other state of existence."

An important legend confirming this belief is preserved in the '*Rajatarangini*' and relates to the great Wular Lake in Kashmir. According to this legend, Mahapadma the *Naga* of the Wular Lake promises the king of Kashmir a gold mine on the condition that he would save the serpent from the *Dravidian* sorcerers. But as the king fulfils the given promise in a manner offensive to *Naga's* self respect, he receives only a treasure of copper.

It is also believed that not only do *Nagas* possess precious metals and stones of great value, they also own other priceless objects sometimes endowed with magical virtues. Legends relate that occasionally they grant these gifts to their 'friends and favourites'.

Apart from material objects possessed with magic properties, the Nagas are also known to impart magical spells to favoured mortals. In a tale in '*Kathasaritsagara*' a hermit endows a prince with magical spell enabling him to dwell unharmed in a lake infested with serpents. Another story in the same book relates to a magical lute which *Naga* Vasunemi the brother of Vasuki bestows to the king of Udayana and as a result redeems him of the spell of a snake charmer. A diferent story informs us of a magician who conjures a Naga to acquire a sword that grants the owner invincibility and royal claim to the fairies. The possession of magic gems and other treasures is a feature *Nagas* are known to share with many other divine and semi-divine beings. By their great charm the *Nagas* are also known to arouse the passion of mortal men and, as a result, legends of matrimonial relationship between the two are fairly well documented in ancient literature.

In the great epic '*Mahabharata*', we have the episode of Arjuna marrying Ulupi, the nymph of the Ganges, or the sage Jaratkaru who married the like named sister of serpent king Vasuki. In

Kalidasa's '*Raghuvamsa*', we have Rama's son, Kusa, marrying Kumudavati the younger sister of Nagaraja Kumada. Another instance of such matrimonial alliance is preserved in the '*Kathasaritsagara*' where Gunadhya the famous author of the lost '*Brihatkatha*' is mentioned to be the son of a *Naga* prince Kiritsena by a Brahman woman.

Similarly we come across the tales of *Naga* or *Nagi* serpents as progenitors of many royal houses of Kashmir. According to '*Rajatarangini*', the dynasty of Kashmir which the famous Lalitaditya (8th century) among its descendants is believed to have descended from *Naga* Karkota. And likewise in later days the kings of Badarwah are believed to have descended from the serpent king Vasuki.

From the legends mentioned in the above passages it is clear that tradition of the Naga spirits in Indian literature is widespread. However, their reference in Kashmir relates to the story of its origin itself. Nila the lord paramount of the *Nagas* of Kashmir is believed to have dwelt in the main source of Vitasta. Hence this fine spring is also known as Nilanaga or *Nilakunda.* The '*Rajatarangini*' also refers to Naga Sankha and Padma of which the latter is identified with *Mahapadma,* the tutelary spirit of the famous Wular Lake.

While *Nagas* are eminently the primary and popular deities of Kashmir, there are references which relate to the existence of other types of spirits which the land abounds with. The chief among these is the *Yaech* which is believed to be a sort of woodland demon or sprite which makes men go astray from the right path by calling in a human voice.

According to Carnac R. Temple " Five out of six men from whom I first heard of this demon had seen *Yaechs* and its existence is evidently an undoubted fact to nine out of every ten people in the Kashmir valley."

The original form of the *Yaech* is that of an animal smaller than a cat of a dark colour with a white cap on its head. It is reportedly claimed that the feet are so small as to be almost invisible. The *Yaech* has the power of assuming any shape and is considered to be immensely powerful and at his human master's bidding will move mountains and towns. However, it can not lift even the smallest fragment of a mill stone. (*Kajvat* in Kashmiri)

The white cap which the *Yaech* wears is shell shaped and is endowed with magical power which render the wearer invisible. It is believed that any person brave enough to snatch it from the *Yaech's* head causes it to become the faithful servant till the cap remains in the possession of that person.

However, the magical cap where it can be kept safely is under a mill stone-(*kajvat*) or its fragment. If placed elsewhere, the *Yaech* will recover it somehow and thus the man looses its endowed gift. Such an incapacitation is believed to be caused by the sensation of feeling pinched when a *Yaech* attempts to do so.

Many instances have been recorded that relate that the *Yaech* cannot cross running water and, when pursued by one, a person is safe if he or she can step across a water stream. A tradition of this belief survives even in many tracts of Punjab where the *Yaech* is confined to certain limits by the large rivers as Yamuna and Satlej but not by small streams. Thus, if a person in Punjab is made ill by a *Yaech* he or she is saved

by crossing the Ravi or Beas rivers.

Likewise in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Predesh every tract, cave, stream or vale has its special demon of the *Yaech* description to whom everything mischievous or unfortunate is attributed. This has even given rise to a race of exorcists, called *Chelas,* in such places.

Besides these , many other traditions connected to the *Yaechs* survive in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. One relates where the *Yaech* has been much confounded with the *Churel*, the malignant ghost of a woman who has died in childbirth. There are even references where the *Yaech* are believed to be the guardians of Kuvera's treasures, who sometimes can make money to disappear.

In classical times, the *Yaech* and the *Guhyaksha* were attendants of Kuvera, the God of wealth and were guardians of his garden and treasury and as such were believed to be humorous and harmless sprites or supernatural beings. Occasionally, they have, however, been referred to as malignant imps who ate men.

Apart from the *Yaech* in Kashmir there is a demon called *Mahanyaech* or Mahayaech- the great *Yaech* which is more powerful than *Yaech*. It is capable of bringing at pleasure immediately costly and valued things from large distances particularly delicacies like green clove, cardamom, and resins. A tradition preserves that the famous temple of Payaech in Karkarpur, Kashmir has some connection with the *Yaech*. The *Mahayaech* is confounded with the *Yakshini*- the dreadier demon representing the attendant of Durga. Some relate *Yakshini* as the wife of Kuvera.

However, whatever attributes have been assigned to the *Yaech*, the people in Kashmir are not much afraid of it and seem to think that it or its tricks are too well known to be dangerous. The general belief held by the people has been that any one taken in by the *Yaech* deserves his fate than otherwise for his gross ignorance. That the *Yaech* in Kashmir is a common man's acquaintance and is not an elusive spirit is preserved in Carnac Temple's following account that he recorded during his visit to the Valley sometime around 1880 A. D.

"At Sopor, I met a man whose great-grandfather- a Mulla, had possession of a *Yaech's* cap. He ordered all the gold and jewelry he wanted on a liberal scale and then having as he thought enough for himself and his heirs for ever, in a moment of mistaken generosity he returned the 'mythical cap' to the *Yaech*, when all his treasures disappeared. The result is that the Mulla's great-grandson trotted after my pony for twelve miles and was rendered immensely pleased by two annas *bakhshis*." Even to the present day, the Kashmiri Pandits propitiate the Yaech on the annual *Khetchi mavas* Day.

Many other odd relics of ancient animism and various other spirits which lived in Kashmir and still live, as some say, are the *Lamia, Jin, Deyu, Dayut, Bram-bram chok, Whop, Mushran, Ghor, Rantus, Daegin Reh, Rah chok* and *Pari.*

The Lamia according to the tradition "is nothing but *Wasdu* or snake two hundred years old which has the power of taking the form of a woman. It is said that the woman resumes her snake-shape only if she went out of her dwelling place at night and in case caught in that form and burnt; the resultant ash as a small round stone,

whatever one touched with will turn into gold. The so-called stone has been related to the classical *Paras* or the Philosopher's Stone.

The *Jins* are of both sexes and all religion and behave very mischievously. In exercising their evil deeds, they seem to be all omnipotent and omnipresent. The *Deyus* are cannibal giants. The *Dayut* is known as the inhabitant of houses. All noises, losses and troubles in the household are attributed to him. To keep them away from causing trouble, they are propitiated with food once a year. Even today the Kashmiri Pandits dedicate a day to such observance as *Gadabat*. The *Dayut* has been confounded to that with the Brownie of Scotish Highlands on the basis of its appearance.

The *Whop* resembles a cat or a dog and occupies old deserted buildings. The *Mushran* appears as a dirty looking very old man. Often it cajoles a person to an affectionate hug which results in a dangerous wasting decline of the health of the person in due course. The *Ghor* are known to feed upon dead bodies and as such are scavengers. The *Deigns* are the females of the *Degus* and some kind of witches who carry malignant disposition to the extent of eating a man's heart out. They often seek husbands among mortal men and their attachment produces fatal consequences.

The *Reh* is an extremely beautiful female of no specific description who entices a man into snare and following that eats him. The *Pari* is beautiful enough that compensates for all the horrors she causes. It is believed that their bodies are made up of five elements of which fire is the predominant one but with the characteristics that it does not consume the rest of its constituent elements. But its amours with a mortal follow the death of the man from its fire.

The *Rantus* has her feet reversed and her eyes are placed perpendicularly parallel to the nose. It has been compared with the *Aal* of Afghanistan. Some say that it is smaller to *Tral*- the fairy of Scandinavia, while others relate her to the *Goul* of Persian and Turkish tales.

There is also said to be a devilish will-o-wisp called *Rah-chok* or the *Bram-bram chok* that is said to be seen in wet and marshy places at night. At times, its description fits into that of a rapidly moving light. It is believed to be a kind of demon with glowing eyes and flaming tongue who carries a pot of fire and leads half-hypnotized victims to a death by drowning in the night. The reasonably long and large river Jehlum, numerous lakes, a multitude of streams and brooks in Kashmir come so generously to aid *Rah-chok* as he never has to lead anyone very far to carry out his cruel deed.

A Brief Survey of Old Maps of Kashmir.

S. N. Pandita

A verse enshrined in *Suryasiddhanta,* the well known Indian astronomical text written about 400 A. D. with additions up to 1100 A. D —in an English translation rendered by M. P. Tripathi – reads : "The art of cartography is a secret of gods. This knowledge can not be imparted to every individual ; it should only be given to a tested pupil who has spent a year or two learning astronomy. This is why I am not making knowledge of cartography public to readers." The same verse in a variant translation prepared by Ebenezer Burges reads thus: "This mystery (the art of cartography) of gods is not to be imparted indiscriminately. It is to be made known to a tried pupil, who remains a year under instruction."

This love of secrecy and retention of learning among a select few perhaps accounts for the Indian tradition from which it is believed that in olden times Indians did not require maps since they had good memories and preferred to keep such things secret. However, it is well known that most of the early maps of India that have been located so far are those which were drawn after the arrival of a large number of foreigners from Europe and the part of India which has the largest number of maps is Kashmir. There is, however, no credible guess or conjecture based on the present knowledge of cartography or map-reading as to why it is so.

But as a matter fact, there are in existence more maps of Srinagar than of any other town or city in India. For this unique situation experts have cited three reasons. First, even though Srinagar remained inaccessible to Europeans for long, yet the indigenous map making did exist there even before their arrival; secondly, it is the climate that has enabled more maps to survive and, thirdly, possibly because the two centrally located hills, the *Hari Parbat* and the *Shankaracharya*, made map making easy as from there the whole of the city spreads to give an easy bird's eye view.

The Jaipur Treasure:

The earliest known map of Kashmir is a large cloth map which ,however, bears no text except the title written on its back. The caption reads 'Map of Kashmir' in Devanagari characters. This map at present remains preserved in the City Palace Museum, Jaipur. As is well known the Rajas of Jaipur served the Mughal Kings at Agra and Delhi and many of them did visit Kashmir for their official engagements and possibly some one from them had this map prepared to commemorate his visit to the beautiful valley.

The most remarkable feature of this map is that human figures shown therein provide information about the dress of the people in those times. Other distinctive features of the map are the depiction of *Hari Parbat* with the city of Srinagar spread down below . Details of eastern side of the map show a rising sun in the backdrop of the famous Mughal gardens of Srinagar namely Nishat and Shalimar Bagh. Several other gardens along the Dal Lake bank, too, are well drawn. The lower mountains have been coloured in purple to show a contrast of mountains with snow in the beyond drawn in white against a blue sky. Tigers and lions have

been shown to play on peaks while deer and birds are shown to roam in meadows. The area of the Dal Lake itself is well defined in the map while the road across the lake with its famous *Oont Kadal* is well marked. The map also depicts more Mughal Gardens on the opposite shore of the Dal Lake beside the well drawn shrine of Hazratbal. A similar map but quite different in style outlines much of the same area with visibly a shrunken Dal Lake.

Map in the British Library:

Another cloth map of the similar kind showing a large area of the Kashmir valley with greater details of roads in Srinagar survives in the archives of the British Library in London. It depicts a crisp inscription stating that it was presented to Captain Wade by Abdur Rahim, a native of Bokhara. Three other inscription written in English read : 'Received from W. H. Macnaughton, Secretary to Government of India, Political Department, August 24, 1836'; ' Panoramic view of Cashmere'; and, 'In a letter , dated July 4, 1836, from the British Political Agent at Ludhiana. By 1891 the map came to be the property of Hugh Falconer whose name is repeatedly written on the back at various places. The map is recorded to have been received by the Surveyor General of India through a letter dated January30, 1837 who later ordered a native author in a communication dated April 10,1837 to construct a European model of this map and granted Rupees five hundred to him for this work.

It has been suggested that this map had been prepared only a short time before it was presented to Wade. Depiction of roads, trees and villages in the map is random which indicates that these details were added to fill blank spaces rather than being a work of survey. Other features that are identifiable in the map include Sherghari, the fort of *Hari Parbat* and river Jehlum named in the map as Bihat. The town of Srinagar and the Dal Lake with the famous island built by King Zain-ul- Abidin on the old Lake site are also conspicuous in this map.

Collection of India Office Records:

An important old map of Kashmir is presently kept in the archives of the India Office Records, London. This map, a crude sketch of Srinagar with some sharp lines, appears to be incomplete. However, it distinctively depicts the Dal Lake and the road across it along with river Jehlum which is shown very wide. The bridges on the river have been drawn in great detail. The map is filled with colour demarcations to depict the topography. While the water bodies, rivers and lakes have been drawn in grey, the gardens have been shown in green colour. This map, is also inscribed with many Hindi and Urdu words that appear to be additions of a later date to the originally drawn plan.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum Collection :

A significant repository of old maps of Kashmir remains well preserved in *Tahrik-i-kala* Kashmir. This 858 page treatise on the history of Kashmir was written by Mir Mohammed Jalalwad in the first third of the 19th century under the instructions of Mian Singh , the famous Sikh Governor of Kashmir during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule. The work was lodged in the Kapurthala Library sometime in 1889 and was later shifted to the Archives of Patiala. At present it is preserved at the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum in Amritsar. In the centre of this thick book, reportedly un-translated till

date, is a section of well drawn 33 illustrations comprising of 18 single page maps and 15 double page maps. Together these form a complete atlas of Kashmir.

The maps are very detailed and administrative divisions which were then called *Pargnas* are distinctly shown. Among the Parganas that have been shown in great detail are those of Shahbad, Brang, Verinag, Wular, Kothar, Thadoo, Phak, Lal, Tapar, Machhipora, Tappa Hamal, Tilhagam, Bangal, Anantnag, Bachhipora, Paraspora, Zinhgir, and Acchabal. Elaborate details regarding villages and rivers are given but no roads or even mountain tracks are marked in these maps.

Six bridges at close intervals over the same water stream perhaps are the bridges across river Jehlum in Srinagar. Most of the other river tracts in these maps have been indicated in silver colour paint. Some large buildings are shown in elevation. One of the maps in this collection depicts some figures beside a shrine. Wherever hills and mountains have been shown in the maps, great attention has been given to their details. Trees are stylized, some are round, and some are tall and thin which probably denote the famous poplars of Kashmir so commonly planted there on the sides of roads. Some of the maps show in great detail different kinds of flowers that abound on the banks of rivers.

Sri Pratap Singh Museum Collection:

A very large series of *Tirtha* Maps of the holy springs in Kashmir are a class by themselves and are housed in the Sri Pratap Museum, Srinagar. These maps were drawn in 1860 A. D. under the supervision of the eminent Sanskrit scholar Pandit Sahib Ram who was ordered by Maharaja Ranbir Singh to carry out an elaborate survey of all the ancient *Tirthas* of Kashmir. According to Aurel Stein, " For this purpose a staff of Pandits was placed at his (Sahib Ram's) disposal." It is, however, important here to mention that Aurel Stein while editing the *Rajatarangini* made reference to these maps particularly while referring to the text of '*Kashmiratirthasangraha*'. However, he did not put them to much use while preparing his treatise on the early geography of Kashmir. It might be so ,because there is no mention of the maps to have been drawn to depict the *Tirthas* embodied in the above stated manuscript.

All together, these maps (some drawn in colour) number more than 250. Reportedly about 25 years ago, 166 of these maps in colour were found in two bound volumes and the remaining un-coloured ones were kept in a separate folder at the museum. Both the coloured and un-coloured maps are drawn on local hand made paper and show no foreign influence. The titles and legends described in these maps are written both in Sanskrit and Persian.

A close study of these important maps, drawn on the spot from firsthand observation, can reveal much old information about the holy-spring places particularly in view of the destruction of a few and damage to many of them that has been caused due to the violence and terror unleashed presently in Kashmir. As such they can also be useful to understand the base-line of sacred Hindu topography of Kashmir and thus help to gain a better idea of the changes the holy spring shrines have suffered in the course of time.

Maps on Shawls:

Needle work shawls, depicting maps appeared in Kashmir at the beginning of the 19th century and constitute another remarkable cartographic product of Kashmir. It is believed that the first of such shawls was made for Maharaja Ranjit Singh and is presently preserved in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum at Srinagar. The weaver artist, according to an erstwhile Curator of the museum, who embroidered the shawl for the Maharaja, was one named Ghulam Mohammed Kulu. He had in fact desired to gift it to the Maharaja but took as many as 37 years from 1819 to 1856 to stitch it and by that time the Maharaja had passed away. Hence this Map Shawl never reached Lahore and has ever since remained in Kashmir. However, this shawl is believed to have triggered a kind of fashion and, by the end of the 19th century, many such shawls existed in Kashmir, including the one with English lettering which was gifted to Queen Victoria. There is ,however, no record of the original drawings from which these Map Shawls were made nor is there any clue as to who came up with the idea first.

Unique as Geographical Artifacts:

From the brief survey of old maps of Kashmir discussed above, it is a happy situation that some of these maps have survived the vagaries of man, nature and time. Yet it is not difficult to guess that so many of them are lost as their value may have remained unrecognized. As geographical artifacts of unique value they provide an irrevocable view of Kashmir through which shines its past. Besides they also give a contemporary glimpse of the manner in which the people of earlier times saw their land, town ,village, a pilgrim site or the routes from one place to another with a fair idea of distance between them. They also provide some insight as to what was important enough to be recorded during those times. Each of these is a unique piece of antiquity particularly given the times Kashmir is in at present when almost everything there that is old is at the peril of being damaged or even lost. While these maps may not be as accurate as the modern day survey drawings and plans, yet their content and style makes them worthy being considered to be of similar value and importance as the old manuscripts, miniature paintings and sculpture.

Future Outlook:

The modest number of old maps of Kashmir which survive in various museums and libraries in the country and abroad have a good chance to be cared for and thus remain preserved. However, it is a paradox that given their historical and geographical importance their scientific study, has so far, not been more than negligible. For reasons unknown they have hardly attracted any attention of native researchers and scholars. Hence, they need to be studied afresh in order to determine as to how much the topography of Kashmir has changed over the last two centuries.

In the meantime the remaining early maps, if any, need to be discovered from their hiding places. However, there may be no guess as to how many more in future can be expected to tumble from the cupboards of Time ! Here one is reminded of Sir Aurel Stein's century old observation: "It is easy to foresee that much of what is of value to the historical student will long before be destroyed or obliterated. It is time to collect as carefully as possible the materials still left for the study of old Kashmir and its earliest records." These golden words of the eminent savant must therefore

inspire us to act now for better study and preservation of these geographical artifacts.

Notes & References:

- An Essay on the Sacred Isles in the West, Francis Wilford, Asiatik Researches, 1805.
- Kalhana's Rajatarangini, Aurel Stein, 1900.
- Survey and Cartography in Ancient India, M. P. Tripathi, Journal of the Oriental Institute, M. S. University, Baroda, 1963.
- Journal of the American Society, Ebenezer Burges, 1860.
- History of Cartography, Brain Harley & David Woodward, University of Chicago Press.
- The Geography of Puranas, S. M. Ali, 1966.
- Indian Maps & Plans, S. Gole, 1989.
- Memoir on Maps illustrating the Ancient Geography of Kashmir, M. A. Stein, JASB,1899.
- Early 18th Century Painted City Maps on Cloth, Facts of Indian Art, C. M. Singh, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1986.
- Indian Art & Culture (1300-1900), Metropolitan Museum of Art, N. Y, 1985.
- Sacred Directions , Orientations and Top of the map, History of Religions, B. L. Gordon,1971.
- Maps and Charts, D. V. Kale, Bharat Itihas Samshodaka Mandal Quarterly, 1948.
- Memoirs of Jehangir- Jehangiri, Henry Beveridge.
- The Kashmir Shawl, John Irwin, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1973.
- Painting in Kashmir (1600-1650), L. Y. Leach, Facets of Indian Art, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1986.
- Ancient Indian Cartography, D. C. Sircar, The Indian Archives, 1951.
- Historical Records of The Survey of India , R. H. Phillimore,1950.
- Painted Maps, Marg, 1987.
- Original Asiatik Map of the World, Oriental Collection,1799.
- Three Indian Maps, R. H. Phillimore,1950.
- Cartography in Mughal India, Irfan Habib, Indian Archives, 1980.
- Artisans of the Paradise- From Ancient to Modern Times, D. N. Dhar, HRCF, 1999.

How The Springs came to Kashmir

(A folktale of Kashmir narrated by Pandit Nana Boey of village Khrew, Kashmir, to Mrs. F.A. Steel in 1892. – From Folklore of Kashmir, collected by R.C. Temple.)

"Long ago there lived a holy Rishi who used every day as an act of charity to give water to all the houses at Khrew. But as there were 1100 houses and only one small stream it was a work of difficulty, and one hot summer there was scarcely any water at all. So the Rishi prayed to Great Mother and she told him to go to a certain Marg and pick a certain flower that grew in a certain place and taking it to the Lake at Gangabal throw it in.

" Then return" said she, "and behind you as you walk will flow Ganga. But remember whatever happens do not look back".

"So the Rishi went to the Marg picked the flower, which he carried to Gangabal in a cloth, and threw it into the water. Then he turned and lo! behind him rose the sound of many waters following his footsteps.

"But the demons who kept guard were angry, and clapped and beat him on the neck and shoulders, but he took no notice. So two hours passed by till his patience wore out, and at last, when a demon changing itself into a wasp stung him behind the ear, he turned sharply round saying " Don't Bother, don't".

"And lo! the Ganga turned too, and flowed back into the Lake. Then the Rishi prayed again to the Great Mother, but she was angry. At last after many days she said: " Ganga you cannot have, but take the cloth in which you carried the flower, and wherever you spread it out a spring of Ganga water will rise."

"So as a penance for his disobedience the pious Rishi travelled all over Kashmir, and wherever water was scarce, he spread out his cloth and lo! a spring appeared."

(The following piece is the record from a tradition of folk history of Kashmir written by J. Hinton Knowles in 1885 A. D. This important and highly significant write-up fell into my hands at the India House Library, London, in the late afternoon of a day in November 2002. I located it from a stack of books, mostly old, kept alongside a pile of loose assorted printed papers that seemingly had come out from the binding of some books and periodicals. The whole heap in fact lay in a less accessed corner of the library. Before leaving the library on that particular day, I obtained a copy of it with the intention that following my return to India I would have it re- published in the then- forthcoming issue of this journal for the benefit of the readers to understand the past of Kashmir in the light of this write-up and thereby also refresh their memory with this lesser known record of our folk history.

On my arrival back home, I kept this short piece among the books and other papers of my home library. However, one is apt to lose sight of even a well-preserved paper when it is left unattended for a long time. It is thus, that this short piece lay treasured in my books all these years awaiting its re-publication. It was only very recently while I was arranging the disarrayed books of my personal library that my eyes chanced to locate it yet again and is now re-published here. In the light of these facts, I hope the readers will appreciate the cause of the delay. For my sake I take refuge in the well- known adage:
"It is better to be late than never".

-- S. N. Pandita

Sed Mol's Prophecy about Sikandar Butshikan

"There was a Dumb from the village of Pattan, who had to take a letter of the Kardar's to the city. (Kardar is the Hindu overseer of a village, a government official, whose business it is to see that His Highness the Maharaja gets his proper share of the grain) The letter was delivered to the man at evening time, and he rose early the next morning to go to the city. It was so dark when he got up that he could not see what he was about, and so he put on the first garment that came to hand, thinking it to be his own. By the time the day dawned he had proceeded far on his journey, and the more sorrow for him that he had walked so fast and had so many miles to return, for he found that he had clothed himself with his brother's wife's long cloak, instead of his own.

"He determined to run back as quickly as possible, because he said, "I have sinned in that I have done this thing, and I must

rectify it by all means within my power." So he went back to his house, quickly, changed his cloak, and started off the second time, and when he reached Srinagar, he carried the letter to its destination, and then went to Sed, Lal Ded's teacher, and told him what sin he had unwittingly been guilty of; and asked him what he must do to atone for it. Sed ordered him to visit a certain Brahman who resided at Mattan, and explain matters to him.

"Now this Brahman was a very bad character, and was at that time living with his brother's wife. When he heard what the Dumb had related to him, he fell into paroxysm of grief, and kept on saying, "What a sinner I am ! Here is this poor fellow in such a terrible state simply because he once put on his sister-in-law's cloak, whilst I, who am living day after day with my sister-in-law, do not have the slightest qualms of conscience." The Brahman asked the Dumb wherefore he had come to him, and who had sent him. The Dumb replied that Sed had told him to come. Then they both, the Brahman and the Dumb, visited Sed and asked for his counsel. The Dumb was quickly dismissed with the order to perform some very small penance. The Brahman was detained alone with Sed for many hours. Sed told him that the only atonement he could make for his enormous crime was to offer himself as a burnt-offering to the god. The Brahman accepted the advice, ordered the pile of wood to be prepared, and was burnt.

"It is written that if any man gives himself up to be burnt upon the pyre he shall ask anything that his heart may wish for at the time of burning, and it shall be granted to him. Accordingly, this Brahman was enquired of as to what he liked. He answered, "I want you to give me some milk and some flesh." When Sed heard his reply, he became exceedingly sorrowful, and said to the people who crowded around the burning man:
"O people, this man will become a Muhammedan king , who will destroy all our idols and cast all our shrines down to the ground." This prophecy was fulfilled.

"Sikandar, surnamed Butshikan, an Image breaker was the sixth Muhammedan king of Kashmir and reigned in 1396 A. D. He destroyed all the Hindu temples and broke their idols into pieces; and when there remained not another temple for this monster to destroy, he determined to go to Amaranath and breakup the sacred emblem of Shiva, which is there in a cave. On arriving at Ganesha Bal on the way, he struck a blow at Ganesha (the son of Shiva by a daughter of Himalaya). There is a fragment of rock here, which lies in the torrent of the Ledur, and has been worn by the angry waters into what the imaginative mind of the Hindu discovers to bear a striking likeness to the head of an elephant, the representation of Ganesha; (- a trunk and a pair of eyes have been painted on by a native artist), and broke his knee. Blood flowed forth in abundance from the wound that the whole stream was coloured by it. Seeing this Sikandar became very much frightened and left off his sacrilegious works, and returned home."

Tribute to the Painting Art of Kashmir

(Speech delivered by Padma Vibhushan Dr. Karan Singh on November 9, 2009 at India International Centre, New Delhi, on the occasion of the inauguration of the painting exhibition by Shri Prithvi Nath Kachru. The exhibition held by the Institute was on for public viewing from

November 9, 2009 to November 13, 2009.)

The artist of the evening, the veteran artist Shri Prithvi Nath Kachru, Shri Gopinath, Shri Budki, distinguished art lovers, Kishori Ji, other artists in the audience and friends.

It is always a great pleasure to interact with someone who has spent all his life in creating beauty. Among the many treasures of Indian cultural heritage has been a very strong tradition of art, of sculpture and of painting. Painting- going back all the way to the caves of Ajanta and Elora and throughout from Kashmir all the way down to Kanyakumari throughout India there has been an extraordinary art developments down through the centuries.

The Kashmir Valley of course is a very special entity and there is reason to believe that the beautiful paintings in the Ladakhi Gumpas that have now been discovered; you may have seen the works of Binoy Bhel and others, were done by artists from the Valley. They were not done by the Ladakhi artists; they were done by the artists from the Valley who used to go up and paint inside those caves. No body could see them; there was no light. It is only now nearly five hundred or thousand years later, I wonder, that we have begun to discover these paintings. Look at those paintings, and the ingenuity of the artists of those times; how they were able to create those most beautiful illustrations of the Budha, the Budha nature and all the deities associated with the Budha and the Bodhi Satva.

Similarly the Kashmiri miniature paintings although not as well known as the Pahari miniatures none the less had a significant role. The movement to which Shri Prithvi Nath Kachru belongs to, of course is the Modern Kashmiri Art Movement which began strangely enough whenever there is some kind of holocaust there is also a unleashing of creativity. After the terrible events of 1947, in fact the whole of 1948, Kashmir was in turmoil and it was at that time Shri Kachru, Ghulam Rasool Santosh and Triloke Kaul started this new movement.

I remember many years ago there was one Dina Nath Wali who used to paint landscapes in water colour. Of course they are no longer in fashion now, but I still think that landscapes are a genre of work and should not go out of fashion. The truble with India is that we take to one genre and forget the other. Look for instance at the portrait painting. Portrait painting is a great art and continues in Europe to the present day . But there are not many portrait painters today in India. Similar is the case with water colurs and landscapes; but this modern art that has developed now is certainly very impressive. It is a riot of colours; the difference of course between the representational art and the modern art is; in the representational art the viewer did not really have very much of the input; there is a beautiful object, a flower or a beautiful woman or a landscape and you could admire it; where as in modern art the viewer has also got to put something in it. Otherwise it is meaningless and can not make any sense. So it is a double creativity; the creativity of the artist as well the creativity of the viewer. And unless both coincide, you will not enjoy the art. Both of them have to. In fact it is a very personal choice; for example if you take Picasso or Dali. I much prefer Dali. I do not like Picasso's paintings even though he was one of the greatest painters of the last century. If somebody gave me a Picasso painting *main to ghar mai rakhta hi nahin hoon (*I do not keep it

in my home) I do not think they are good paintings. They no doubt are beautiful but I keep paintings that I like and find beautiful. I like Dali. Dali's Landing of Columbus in America or if you see his painting of Crucifixonation of Christ; it is master piece of our times. It introduced the element of Time!

I have traveled throughout my life- myself and my wife, and we have seen all the great museums in the world- the Metropolitan in New York, the Hermitage in Lenningrad, St Petersburg , the Prado, Prague, and the Victoria & Albert in London; great all great museums. The trouble and tragedy in India is that we have great art but we do not have great museums. There is not a single museum in India that we can really call great by international standards. I do not know why/ but we need something bigger. You see we have the National Museum here; but it does not have the grandeaur and sweep of the Lumb or that of the Hermitage or of the Prado.

May be I would have converted the Rashtrapati Bhavan into a national museum. That would have been a suggestion I might have made in different circumstances. Whatever that may be, as I was talking to some one that we do have good museums, for example we have great Saraswati Mahal Museum in Thanjavur or the Mysore Museum. In Thanjavur we have some of the most beautiful Natarajas. Nataraja is my most favourite diety. If you notice you could see in this annexe there is a Nataraja and it is written there that it is a personal gift given by me and my wife. Even though Kashmir was a great Siva centre but Nataraja was unknown there. I am the first person to have built a Nataraja temple in Jammu in the Raghunath Mandir Parisar.

The Kashmir Valley had never heard of the Nataraja. There it were other forms and different philosophy. You had the great Saiva Acharaya Abhinavagupta who is surely one of the outstanding figures in our whole philosophical history and intellectual history. And again he is not as well known as Shankarachraya but he certainly is as great as Adi Shankaracharaya.

You know, as was said by you *(P. N. Kachru)* those who live in Kashmir seldom come out of that place and perhaps only become to belong to that place. And those Kashmiris who have come out of Kashmir have done extraordinarily well . May be he is a Nehru or a Katju or any one of this generation like Shri Kachru or Kishori or Ghulam Rasool.

But unlike them the people of Jammu remained anchored to that place alone. However, those who came out they excelled and did well because they needed a background or an ambience to excel; And India is one of the greatest stages one can have; because there is so much colour, so much variety or so much beauty, whether in the Nature or in the beautiful temples or whatever, it is full of the spirit of beauty. Our great motto *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* is the motto of truth and beauty and without beauty there is no creation say the *Upanishads* all the time. There is no beauty without truth. One can see all the time that the magician who created the whole universe is the ultimate artist. So this Modern Art Movement in Kashmir is very powerful and is nearly 60 years i.e. it started in 1948- 49 and we are in 2009.

You may have eaten the *Ladoos* on my birth, and of course I am getting older but in earlier times I would meet people saying that we have eaten *Ladoos* when

you were born. Unfortunately that generation has almost vanished and hardly a few of them may be surviving but plenty of *Ladoos* were distributed to mark the event of my birth. In fact all my life I have been hearing people say "*aap key janam din par ham ne bahut ladoo khayen hain- bahut ladoo khayen hai.*" And this too is a miracle.

About the Kashmiri Pandits I have always said that whatever education and knowledge I have acquired, I have acquired and imbibed it from Kashmiri Pandits. Be that to recall Pandit Parmanand whom I have always considered as my *Sastra Guru* or may be I say Professor B. K. Madan or Professor R. C. Pandita, the former principal of S. P. College or late Shyam Lal Pandit who taught me English or it was Janki Nath Bhan who taught me Political Science or Professor P. N. Chaku; The fact remains I received all my education from Kashmiri Pandits and have hence remained always grateful to them.

However, I feel so much sad to see that our own people in our very own land of this great country have become refugees. Refugees from other land have been coming to our country- the Zorastras and the Jews having come here as a consequence of terrorism is well known but that our own people in this very country become refugees is both tragic and ironic. What can one say; there have been times when only eleven Kashmiri Pandit families survived and lived in Kashmir but today the number may be more than eleven and efforts are underway that this number increses gradually and more people are able to go there.

Recently I have read reports that new settlement colonies and about twelve hundred habitation units have come up for the settlement of Kashmiri Pandits. In fact there is tremendous improvement at Khir Bhawani Temple complex. I urge you to go there and see for yourself the *kaya-kalap* that has taken place in Khir Bhawani particularly for the fact that it is the most sacred shrine of the Kashmiri Pandits. You will observe that our Dharmarth Trust and Government of India have invested lot of money to improve the holy precinct which in reality has changed for the good. And if for some reasons you may not have gone there, you may perhaps go there in the next year and see the miracle that has taken place by the grace of *Maata Bhawani.*

For twenty years there has been an orgy of violence and terror in Kashmir. We have saved Shankarcharaya Temple. We have also tried to secure and protect several other Siva Temples like the Shankaracharaya and the other one at Gupta Ganga in Ishber. They are all safe under the care of Dharmarth Trust. But several of the smaller temples, almost all of them have been destroyed and that is a matter of great misfortune.

May be I have gone into a different aspect but let me come back to speak about Kachru Sahib. *(P. N. Kachru)* I have been seeing his creative work and art for several years now and in fact have inaugurated his work on an earlier occasion also. I did that then at this very centre. I have seen the art of Ghulam Rasool Santosh and Kishori Kaul . It is in my museum also. It is therefore heartening to know that in spite of the turmoil in Kashmir the intellectual and artistic creativity of the Kashmiri Pandits is intact and flourishing. Indeed one can say that in spite of their having been uprooted from their native land there has been no decline in their creative abilities and one can only say that instead it has

increased and grown further.

Perhaps, as it is so well known that at times in extreme adverse circumstances creativity flourishes in the form of various art forms. So I suppose the Kashmiri artist who suffered and had to come lock-stock and barrel; there art must be reflecting some pain, some anguish and some distress they may have suffered as a result of their displacement. But I have great confidence in the resilience of Kashmiri Pandits and in their intellectual and spiritual resilience. I am certain and confident that a day will come that some of them will go back to Kashmir, a day will come when considerable number of them will go back and in fact a day will come when Kashmiri Pandit input in the Kashmir Valley will again get settled and used there; because Kashmir Valley is the most extra ordinary cultural centre.

We have the Vedic period, the Buddhist period, we have the Saiva period and we have the renaissance times of the great Acharya Abhinavagupta, then we have Lalleshwari and we have the Sufi input. In fact it is most outstanding place where we have this cultural matrix, the texture of greatness. I hope Lord Siva will restore again some peace and tranquility there.

I also want to say that in one of your books on Dal Lake you (*P.N. Kachru*) have mentioned Dal Lake is in such a miserable state. In fact when you go from Nishat to Burzhom and you can see the most pitiable condition of the Lake. I seen that lake as a child and it used to be in great glory and now it has shrunk and is full of weeds. I do not know the crores and crores of rupees that have been spent on that Lake, where all that has gone, what happened to all that money, it is very difficult to say but the Lake is in extremely bad state. While it is well known and sad that in Kashmir where there is good there is bad also, where there is happiness, sad things also abound but what pains is the fact that Dal Lake is in bad shape and almost dying and we do not need to be told through seminars held in places like Bhopal that it is dying or it is dead. It is front of our eyes and its condition is miserable. We will have to do something. It is of international importance. We have to see for the ways and means how to revive it and save it.

Well what can one say, but in any case Shri Kachru many felicitations to you, and may you continue painting for another fifteen years. You are eighty five and we have the old adage *jeewam sharda shatam*. May you live for hundred years! I am sure Shri Kachru will continue with his creativity and he will continue with his art.. And I am also very keen to see the paintings even though I arrived here at exact 5 but many lecture presentations made by others have taken an hour and now it is 6. I on behalf of everyone present here convey to you *(P.N. Kachru)* our heartiest felicitations and about Gopinath Ji, I do not know if he is a State Subject but honorary Kashmiri Pandit he certainly is. I can not grant him the State Subject but the title of honorary Kashmiri Pandit is duly deserved by him and I accord him the honorary title of Kashmiri Pandit.. He is one such great crusader who is always there wherever any work for any great cause is being pursued. Perhaps this may be the result of his deeds done in the previous *janma*.

Of course I am meeting Shri Deepak Budki for the first time and other eminent people are there. Earlier I had the occasion of going to Pamposh Enclave and met there also some eminent people and even saw the temple there. But as I referred earlier to some great savants of Kashmir, I would in particular make

mention of two other savants also. Both of them were Kashmiri Pandits.
One was Swami Lakshman Joo who used to love me immensely. And whenever I used to go to meet him he would get *paranthas* prepared for me in particular and would make me sit before him and affectionately oversee that I ate them with *kehwa* in his presence near a small platform. I can but say that his kindness has been immense to us. And when he took ill towards the end while I was away to America as Ambassador and it was the time when all the havoc let loose in Kashmir. In fact all the unfortunate developments that happened there occurred between August and March.

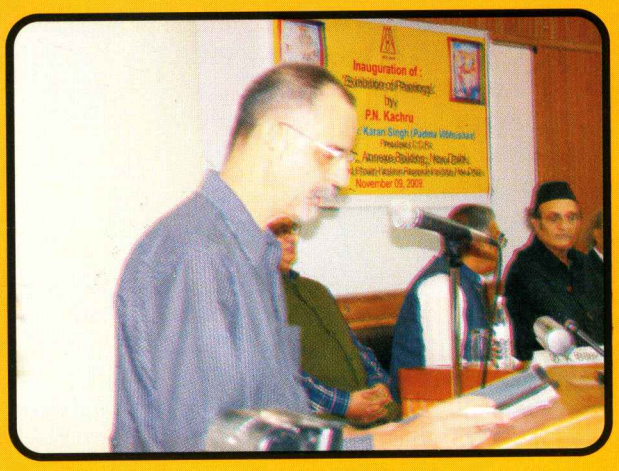
And when I returned, I came to know that Pandit Lakshman Joo was ailing. However, it was with great difficulty that I located that he was then in some locality of Noida and finally went to see him there. There I found him lying in an unconscious state and I prayed to Lord Siva that he being such a great soul ought not be kept in such a distressing state and thereafter I applied some *bhasm* (sacred ash) on his forehead and it was simply by the grace of God that by next day 5 in the morning he left his mortal coil. There is no doubt that he was a great soul and an eminent person.

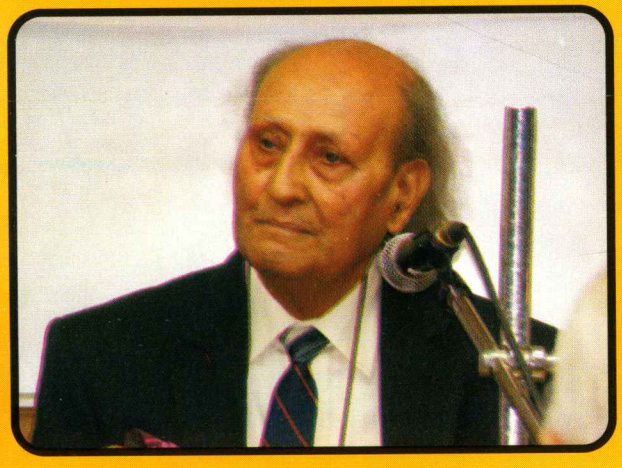
The second Kashmiri Pandit I would like to refer to is Pandit Gopi Krishen. But unfortunately the Kashmiri Pandits did not recognize his attainments and greatness and hardly cared for it. But the fact remains that his eminence was well acknowledged all over the world. It is well said that a saint in his home is hardly ever noticed; may be he was an ordinary employee in the Civil Supplies Department, but whatever be that may be his great contribution to the *Kundalini yoga* and his great book on *Kundalini* which earned him a great reputation all across the country is certainly an incomparable contribution to the subject. Strangely enough when he too expired, it was someone who then gave me lotus flowers and I went there and placed eleven of those lotus flowers around his body. Such instances I have always considered as a kind of blessings of these great men. Rest of the all who I named earlier were secular but these two particularly were spiritual and that has been the tradition of the Kashmiri Pandits.

However, you are in the forefront of the secular traditions as well as in the spiritual traditions and it is my earnest prayer to Lord Siva to be kind and benevolent to all of us so that we can progress in our lives and Kashmiri Pandits who have undergone the savage brutality and deprivation get relief from the calamity they have suffered.

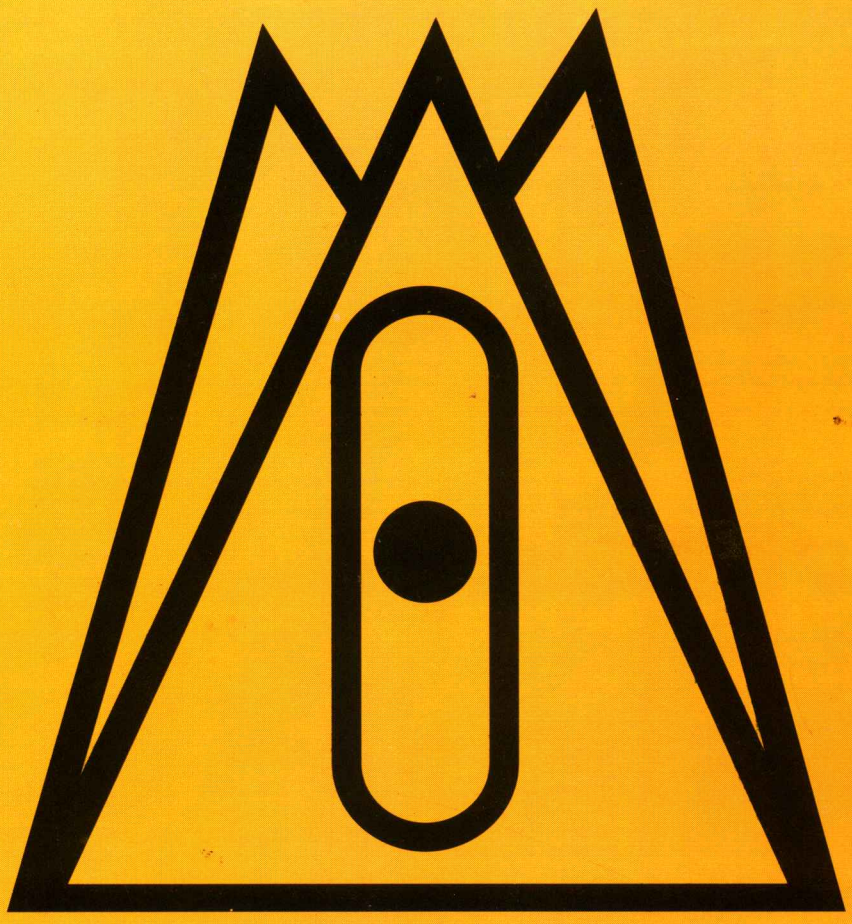
Mae Chamm Aash Paghaech'

An anthology of some select Kashmiri poems by Late Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim' titled : 'Mae Chamm Aash Paghaech' is expected to be released by the end of April 2010. The work is being published by Pandit Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim' Foundation, New Delhi.





Inauguration of Exhibition by Mr. P.N. Kachru



ज्ञानं अन्नं

Printed and Published by P N Kachru for and on behalf of :
Nityanand Shastri Kashmir Research Institute • Cir. Office : 402, Link Apartments,
Patpar Ganj, Delhi-92
Editor P N Kachru • Typeset and Printed at : Wings Printers, Faridabad - 121 005
Annual Subscription : Rs. 150/-